



PUNTA GORDA ENGLEWOOD BEACH

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The Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island Coast

Charlotte County Tourist Development Council Meeting Minutes Friday, June 11, 2021

A meeting of the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council was held Friday, June 11, 2021, at Murdock Administration Building, Conference Room B-106, 18500 Murdock Circle., Port Charlotte, FL.

Members Present

Kathy Burnam
Commissioner Christopher Constance
Councilmember Jaha Cummings
David Haynes
Robin Madden
Councilmember Nancy Prafke
Janet Watermeier
Keith Farlow
Kelly Williamson

Staff Present

Sean Doherty, Director of Tourism,
Lena Applegate, Admin Services Coordinator
Maureen Morgenthien, Director of Marketing
Sean Walter, Business Development Director
Cynthia Hinson, Director of Communications & PR
Charles Bear, Tax Collector's Office
Elie Fischhof, Fiscal Services
Emily Lewis, Deputy County Administrator
Lori Tetreault, Deputy County Attorney

Members Absent

N/A

Guests

Tara Zajas, Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce

1. Call to Order & Welcome – Commissioner Christopher Constance

Commissioner Christopher Constance called the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Roll Call

A quorum was established.

3. Citizens' Input

Robin Madden, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, reported that individual businesses should continue to make good faith efforts to maintain safety and sanitation protocols in order to protect the immunity that they received from the Florida COVID-19 Liability Protection Law. Madden continued to report that the To-Go Alcohol Bill passed which allows restaurants to sell alcoholic beverages for to-go and delivery. Madden advised that the continued funding for Visit Florida has passed and will receive \$75 million.

4. **Approval of TDC Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Kathy Burnam, seconded by Janet Watermeier, to approve the April 9, 2021 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Appointment of Vice Chair**

Commissioner Constance appointed Councilmember Nancy Prafke as Vice Chair for the Tourist Development Council.

6. **Charles Bear – Tourist Tax Report**

The tax collector report was presented by Charles Bear. Bear reported that collections for the second quarter, fiscal year 2021 were \$2,224,377.56. There are still 530 total suspect accounts on file. There were not any suspect accounts found in the second quarter that are now active. Year to date collections from October 2020 through September 2021 is \$3,720,558.84. In April of last year there was a total of \$94,631.50 collected. In April of this year there was \$580,592.42 collected.

7. **Elie Fischhof – Budget Report & Budget Overview – Fiscal Services**

The fiscal report was presented by Elie Fischhof. Fischhof reported that we are now nine months into fiscal year 2021 with a budget of \$3.1 million. Total expenditures are currently \$1.4 million which represents 61% being expended. A large portion of the expenditures are interfund transfers that are completed in the first quarter together with Central/Indirect Services. Fischhof advised that current encumbrances total \$141,000. The encumbrances are mainly against Other Contractual Services, Promotional Activities and Contracted Services account lines. He finalized his report by stating that the current budget to actual review appears to be in order.

Sean Doherty started off the budget overview presentation with a summary of what the Tourism Bureau does and the three core services that are provided by the bureau. Elie Fischhof provided a high-level overview of the 2021 fiscal budget. Fischhof and Doherty summarized elements of the total budget together with current and projected expenditures.

8. **Robin Madden – Budget Review**

Robin Madden reported that the budget appeared to be in order.

9. **Event Development**

A motion was made by Jane Watermeier to approve the addition to General Guideline 3 and the addition of General Guideline 11 of the Event Development Program Guidelines and Application. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jaha Cummings, to approve the changes. Motion carried unanimously.

Tara Zajas, Marketing Manager with the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, provided a verbal presentation in support of Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce's Event and Festival Application for funding of \$10,000. Zajas advised that the Wine and Jazz Festival has grown over the years. As the event has been successful, a decision to revamp from a one day to a four day event was made.

Based on the scoring tabulation of 87.6% in favor of the event planning application, the TDC found that the Wine & Jazz Week event does meet and exceed protocol of 60% for funding eligibility.

Councilmember Jaha Cummings made a motion to approve funding for the full \$10,000, which was seconded by David Haynes. The motion carried unanimously.

10. **Director's Report**

Sean Doherty, Tourism Director, provided an overview of the Strategic Plan Implementation Analysis and the VCB's current action efforts.

Commissioner Constance initiated a conversation regarding the potential funding of the PicklePlex expansion by the county. Commissioner Constance expressed his support of the project since the events held at the PicklePlex generates significant economic impact and hotel room nights. Councilmember Prafke expressed her support as well for the expansion project and the urgency of moving a request for public funding forward.

11. Citizen's Comments

There were no Citizen Comments.

12. Council Comments

David Haynes reported real estate business is still solid.

Councilmember Jaha Cummings was in agreement that our destination is remains in high demand.

Keith Farlow reported that his restaurant, as well as his counterparts are showing extremely strong business in June.

Councilmember Nancy Prafke advised the Punta Gorda City Council approved a new sign ordinance preventing profanity on any public signs.

Kelly Williamson reported that the Tiki Bar is reporting high numbers over 2019.

Janet Watermeier reported that the Visual Art Center holds over 20 exhibits. Watermeier reported this summer the center has a member showcase. The showcase is comprised of 50 members exhibiting local and regional art.

Kathy Burnam reported that traffic and business at Fishermen's Village has been very good. Events are ramping up and doing very well.

Robin Madden reported business is doing very well. Numbers for May and June are showing better than ever.

Commissioner Christopher Constance highlighted a presentation on Seagrass shown at the June 8th Commission meeting.

13. Next Scheduled Meeting

Councilmember Nancy Prafke advised of a scheduling conflict for the August 11, 2021 meeting date and made a motion to reschedule for the TDC meeting for August 6, 2021. The motion was seconded by Kathy Burnam and the Motion carried unanimously. The next scheduled TDC meeting is at 9:00 a.m. Friday, August 6, 2021. The meeting will be held in the B-106 Conference Room, Administration Building, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte.

14. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.